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A TALE OF TWO MASSACRES.

To those who have lived in the East during the last twenty years, and have been in the way of hearing, there have come to knowledge not a few histories, some romantic and some tragic, arising out of the Bulgarian massacres and the incidents that succeeded them. It will be surprising if the next twenty years do not bring to light many other such stories in connection with the recent fearful massacres in Armenia. But the following tale, which is true in every particular except that all identifying names have been altered, is probably at present unique, and will not in the future be often matched in respect of the singular way in which it unites these two dark epochs of suffering.

July of 1877 saw the Shipka Pass, which the Turks had so stubbornly defended, in the hands of the invading Russians. After that, the next few moves for General Gourko were very easy. With a broken foot before him, retreating into a region devoid of fortresses, he had but to descend the steep southern slope of Stara Planina and possess himself of the rich region beneath it. Kazanluk with its rose-gardens was his, and so too was the lovely and fertile valley of the Tundja, stretching westwards towards that most beautifully situated of all Bulgarian towns—Kalofer, and eastwards towards Sliven and Yambol. But close at hand there was an important town, the capture of which would do much to give him the command of the vast plain of the Maritza. This was Stara Zagora (the *Eski Zaghra* of the Turks), to reach which he had only to cross the slight range called Karadja Dagh, forming the southern slope of the Tundja valley, by the easy pass a short distance to the south-east of Kazanluk. Reserving the greater part of his force for the descent upon Philippopolis by way of Kalofer, General Gourko selected six thousand of the Bulgarian volunteers who had rendered him such signal aid in the fighting at Shipka, added to these two thousand men from his own Russian army, and at once struck for Stara

Zagora. Such Turkish troops as were there offered no resistance, but fell back to the south; and the victorious invaders seized their prize.

Then the Bulgarians fell before their great temptation. The scenes at Batak and the many other places where the horrors of the massacres had rent the heart of their nation, were still fresh before their eyes: the bursting wrath and hatred against the barbarous oppressors who had tried by such foul means to arrest their fight for liberty had not yet been appeased. And now they had a chance to take revenge. Few of the inhabitants of Stara Zagora had had time to escape; and the reputation of the Turks in that region already stank. The Bulgarians made them their victims. If they had stopped with the five hundred whom they killed in hot blood as soon as they had taken the town, the slaughter would have been bad enough; but they did worse. In the evening they looked about them, and found some fifty or sixty *tsigani* (gypsies) still left in their miserable huts on the outskirts of the town, and doubtless hanging on in hope of finding their turn for plundering. These wretches the Bulgarian bands compelled to dig a trench and to bring into it all the Turkish slain in the town; and then, when all was done, they killed the *tsigani* also, threw their bodies upon those of the Turks, and filled in the earth.

It was a horrible day's work, inexcusable even after all the dreadful provocation they had received; and bitterly and speedily they had to pay for it. How it was that General Gourko made the great mistake of the following days is a secret that lies with the Russians; but, at any rate, learning that Suleiman Pasha had concentrated a force at Kara-bunar, a place some little distance to the south of Stara Zagora, he moved upon him to dislodge him from his position. But the Turkish force was larger than General Gourko supposed—forty thousand strong. The Russians had speedily to retire; and when the Turks followed them and inflicted a defeat upon them in the outskirts of Stara Zagora, in the course of which they captured the standard

of the Bulgarian volunteers, the invaders had to retreat still farther to the north till they should be reinforced from Kazanluk. And now it was the turn of the Turks. They swore that in no place where there had stepped the foot of a Russian soldier would they leave alive any Bulgarian male over eight years of age ; and that oath they not only kept to the letter in one of the most appalling episodes of the insurrection and war, but they killed many a woman and child too, and some who were not Bulgarians.

The village of Dérékeny was one of the places which they visited with sword and fire. When they came upon it, the people were in the act of taking to flight. One of the families had brought out their wagon ; and as the mother with her infant baby and her little girl Ekaterina (five years old) were standing by the oxen, the father went into the house to collect a few necessaries. He came out just to meet a rush of Turks. Instantly they fell upon him ; and at the feet of his wife and children he was cut to pieces. In moments like these, even a mother's love may not be able to preserve the mental balance against the suddenly added weight of fear and horror. It was so in this case. With a shriek of agony the murdered man's wife fled from the spot with her infant in her arms ; and in the midst of that wild scene of pillage and lust and bloodshed little Ekaterina was left standing alone.

It may have been some hours later—it may have been after a day or two—a detachment of the officers of the British Red Cross Society, in going its rounds of mercy over this scene of carnage, found the little girl. She was far from being their only foundling ; and in due time they, with their band of hapless waifs, followed over the plain that heterogeneous and forlorn caravan which represented the last of the lately flourishing town of Stara Zagora. Adrianople was their objective point ; and there the Red Cross doctors, after all inquiries dictated by humanity and prudence, handed little Ekaterina into the care of a benevolent Armenian family.

For three or four years the poor Bulgarian orphan was kindly treated in her new home. Perforce she had to learn Armenian ; and the little that she knew of her own language soon slipped away entirely from her through lack of use. Her adopted parents did not conceal from her that she was Bulgarian. They also told her, what they had learned from the Red Cross doctors, that she was from the village of Dérékeny, in the Stara Zagora district. But they were not able to tell her what her father's name was : and the poor child herself was unable to supply the information. But at the end of three or four years business reverses came upon her foster-father. He removed to Constantinople ; and there, unable any longer to maintain the stranger child with his reduced income and higher cost of living, he passed her over to a trusted friend of his own nationality who lived in that great Asiatic quarter of Constantinople—Scutari.

Ekaterina was now about nine years old. Her new parents had a son, Hampartsoun, just a year her senior ; and these two, so closely matched in age, grew up together with the happy freedom of brother and sister. The girl's story, however, was well known, and indeed was carefully preserved for her sake. When Hampartsoun had reached

the age of fifteen, his parents took him the pilgrimage to Jerusalem ; and shortly after his return as a full-fledged *hadjî* it became time to think of having him worthily betrothed. The father and mother discussed the matter with their friends ; but so warm a place had Ekaterina by this time secured in their hearts that their final decision was that a better daughter-in-law than she could not be found. Accordingly, they betrothed their Hampartsoun to this Slavonic maiden of Armenian tongue ; and when they reached the ages of seventeen and sixteen respectively, they were married amid much quiet rejoicing.

In 1892, four years after her marriage, there chanced to reach the ears of this young wife the news that there was a Bulgarian family living in their district in Scutari. She had no idea who they were or where they were from ; but a strong desire began to take possession of her to try whether they could not help her to find out something about her relatives. She went to see them, and, speaking in Turkish, told them her story. Mr and Mrs Georgieff welcomed her as a sister ; and the husband, whose work took him into nearly every town and village in Bulgaria, and who had already been successful in tracing the connections of several victims of the Bulgarian atrocities, began with zest the task of hunting up her friends. The case proved easier than most. Mr Georgieff wrote to the *knet* (chief magistrate) of Dérékeny, minutely describing everything that might help to identification ; and he on receipt of the letter at once called the villagers together, read them the communication he had received, and began to make inquiries. In a very short time it was elicited that Ekaterina's grandmother was there in the village, and with her the child, now a maiden of sixteen, that had been in her mother's arms that day when her father was killed ; but her mother had married a second time, and was living in another village. The latter, however, on being communicated with, replied that if this was really her Ekaterina, the ends of her little fingers ought to be found to be bent. Examination was made, and this identifying proof was at once discovered.

Mr Georgieff now wrote to Ekaterina's friends, sending pictures of herself, her husband, and their three children, and enclosing as a gift for her mother a handkerchief which her husband and she had woven and embroidered. At the same time he said that their business was not prospering very well, that the actions of certain revolutionaries were causing the Armenians some anxiety, and that they would be glad to move into Bulgaria were it not that they were too poor to raise funds for the journey ; he asked, therefore, whether the friends there could not help them to effect the removal. But the relatives in Bulgaria, though willing, were as poor as themselves, and replied that it was beyond their power to give help. And so each went on their own way for other four years, with only the occasional interchange of news through the Georgieffs.

By the summer of 1896 a fourth child had been born to Hampartsoun and Ekaterina ; but one of their first three had died. This was the size of their family when that insane attack by Armenian revolutionaries on the Ottoman Bank gave the Turkish government its pretext for a massacre of the Armenians of Constantinople. In two days

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and a half between six and seven thousand of them fell. Few were the Armenians who slept in their own homes on these fateful nights, and for many nights beyond. Nearly every foreigner in the city harboured his quota of refugees ; and where no foreigner was at hand, Greeks and Bulgarians opened their houses, and, let it be added in justice and with thankfulness, so also did not a few of the better sort of Turk.

As soon as the first horror died down, and before the government had fully made up its mind how to act, there was a great rush of Armenians for lands of safety—distant or near ; and one or two of the embassies and consulates did noble work in assisting them to make their escape. But in a few days the government had matured its plans ; and then followed weeks of persistent, implacable hunting of the afflicted people from house to house, filling the prisons with them, and extorting from them by threats and by promises all that they could wring both of information and of ransom.

Hampartsoun had not been in any way mixed up with the revolutionary plots ; but he well understood that innocence would be no protection to him when the relentless agents reached his home. He must fly before they could lay hands on him ; otherwise his fate must be months in prison with probable death at the end either by illness, or on the gibbet, or through treachery—and meanwhile, what of Ekaterina and the children ? So once more he applied to his friend Mr Georgieff. Now this good man and some others (foreigners and natives) had become so zealous in the aiding of Armenians to escape that they had established a means of working which might be compared in a small way to the 'underground railway' of slavery times in America. The hatred and vigilance of the Turk could not cope with this society's determination to save ; and scores of men were safely passed through its hands who might otherwise at least have been exposed to great privations and danger. In this way Hampartsoun and his family were landed beyond the reach of alarm ; and, as may naturally be supposed, Bulgaria and the Stara Zagora village of Dérékeny were selected as their haven of refuge. It was not done without difficulty. Funds had to be raised by private appeals ; passports and railway and steamer franks had to be applied and begged for ; friends on various points on the route had to be communicated with who should interest themselves to help forward the little party in its ignorance of the language of the country. Once, through the failure to secure the passport in time, the villagers of Dérékeny, who had perhaps prematurely been communicated with, came in their wagons to the railway station at Nova Zagora to receive the refugees, but had to go back without them. But at last all difficulties were surmounted ; and behold Hampartsoun, sent on by a friend in Nova Zagora in his own wagon, bringing Ekaterina and their children to the village of her birth—a stranger amongst her own kindred ! The whole village came out *en file* to receive them. Girls and youths had on their *prazdnik* attire, parents brought all their children to welcome back the lost one, the strains of the *gaida* testified to the joy of the people and to their readiness to celebrate the happy event

with a dance, and in front of all moved the *kmet* with his secretary to give to the proceedings the needed touch of formality and the air of official sanction. It was a joyful meeting. Some of the older villagers still retained their knowledge of Turkish, and so the awkwardness of dumb-show was happily avoided. The grateful immigrants were smilingly conducted to quarters that had been prepared for them by the commune, and were shown in triumph the heap of grain, the stack of firewood, and the various other provisions which thoughtful kindness had prompted the villagers to prepare, so that their first thoughts should not be as how they were to live.

Not many days later Hampartsoun wrote to tell his Bulgarian friend in Constantinople that the commune had passed over to his wife several acres of land as her share of her father's inheritance, eight hundred piastres as the rent of these acres during her years of absence, and a site in the village where they might rear a house. Thus all their needs were met and their future provided for, while the special industry with which they were acquainted—the weaving of kerchiefs for embroidery—promised to bring them in what might be looked upon as wealth.

And so Ekaterina, carried as a refugee child from the home where father and friends had been massacred, was driven back to it again—a happy wife and the joyful mother of children—by the massacre at Constantinople.

A TSAR'S GRATITUDE.

CHAPTER XX.

PHILIPOF and his companion hastened to obey the advice of the wounded Colya. Summoning the old woman who had admitted them into the house, they hastily bade her remain beside the couch of the sufferer ; then Doonya cautiously opened the front door and looked well up and down the dark street. So far as could be seen, there was no one within sight or hearing, and the two conspirators—for Philipof felt like a conspirator, though he did not clearly understand whom or what he was conspiring against—together passed rapidly down the road.

'To Kirilof's first,' whispered Doonya ; 'he is the doctor, you know. I fear he will not do much for poor Colya ; but he must do his best. Down this street—Colya asked for a notary—he wishes to make his will, poor fellow ; he has not much to leave ! Stop, in here, quickly !' Doonya had suddenly grasped the arm of her companion and dragged him within the gateway of a large house ; here she pushed him into the shadow of a portico within the yard, and waited a moment, finger to lip. 'Did you see ?' she whispered presently.

'See what ?' asked Philipof, whose heart was beating rapidly, though he did not know why ; he had caught the agitation of his companion without knowing its cause.

'The bloodhounds,' Doonya whispered back. 'They are off on the trail already. In half-an-hour from now my home and Colya's also will be visited and turned topsy-turvy by them ; probably others too. Now we can go on—come !' Cautiously the pair stepped past the sleeping figure of the *dvornik*, who sat snoring on his

bench at the front gate, wrapped, though it was now the middle of summer, in his sheepskin. This time Kirilof's house was safely reached.

It was nearly midnight by this time, but some sort of distinctive knock given by Doonya soon brought the doctor himself to the door, dressed in deshabille and evidently roused from his slumbers. He started violently to see Doonya accompanied by a stranger.

'Great Heaven, Doonya,' he cried—instantly closing the door behind her after a hasty glance down the stairs—'what's the matter? Who is this? Has anything happened?'

'Much,' said Doonya; 'this is a good friend. Colya and I were seized by three of the bloodhounds as we came from you know where; this gentleman delivered us out of their hands, for which may God give him a heavenly kingdom. But Colya is dying, I fear; they stabbed him when they found they could not take him alive; he is now lying awaiting you at committee-room No. 4. Go at once. He wants a notary—take one with you.'

'A notary?' repeated the doctor. 'What for? Is it safe, Doonya? Has he fuked? It is not a dying confession, is it?'

'Come, Kirilof, you should know poor Colya better than that,' said the girl. 'He is a fool, no doubt, but his heart is as true as steel; Colya is no coward. Take a notary with you; it is his dying wish.'

Kirilof shook his head dubiously, as though he did not altogether approve of the commission. Nevertheless he presently did as he was bidden, and repaired—as quickly as he could dress himself and summon the man of law, who likewise had to be awakened and dressed—to the house which Doonya had described as committee-room No. 4.

With the permission of the reader, we will now follow his movements, leaving Philipof and his companion for the present to think over the problem of where to find a safe place of concealment for Doonya, to which somewhat embarrassing undertaking Sasha was more or less committed by the parting injunctions of the wounded man.

Kirilof hastily made an examination of the student, whom he found undoubtedly sinking, though still full of the natural or assumed gaiety and verve which he habitually wore, and which were never thrown off even at the most serious moments.

'Well,' he said as Kirilof finished his examination; 'it's pretty hole, isn't it? How long will you give me to make my will?'

Poor Colya struggled gamely to conceal the agony which the exertion of talking was causing him. Kirilof shook his head sympathetically.

'An hour or two, my friend,' he said; 'I fear I cannot promise you more than that. What is this foolery about your will? Do not vex yourself by talking—it will give you additional pain and also hasten your end.'

'Be quiet, Kirilof, and get the *vodka* out of the cupboard yonder; the committee will not grudge me a drop under the circumstances. Ah!' he continued, 'that's better; I'm not sure that I should not like to live on a bit for the sake of the *vodka*; however, the next existence is to be altogether in a spirit-world, isn't it? There's a comfort in that thought!—Now, Mr Notary, are

you there? Will the doctor's witness be sufficient, or must a third party be called in?'

'It would be as well to have another witness if your communication is to be of importance,' said the man of law.

'It is of the highest importance,' said Colya; 'you will be quite surprised to learn what exalted personages are to be associated with my last dying confession!—

'Colya,' said Kirilof hoarsely, 'what are you saying?' The doctor looked pale and haggard, and his hand trembled as he laid it upon the wounded man's arm. 'This gentleman is not a priest, he is a notary. If you have anything to confess!—Colya laughed quite merrily.

'Oh, it's all right,' he said, returning the surgeon's meaning look; 'mine is a mere personal statement; I am going to do a stroke of tardy justice.—Call in the gendarme, Mr Notary; he will do excellently well for a witness—particularly well!' The notary left the room in search of the night policeman. Kirilof sprang to Colya's bedside as soon as the door was closed.

'Colya,' he said, 'what devilry is this? I warn you solemnly that at the first suspicion of treachery in your confession I shall find means to open your wound; your vile life shall go out before your lips have compromised the party. It is a base end to die betraying those who have trusted you: think of Doonya—think of the great cause and all you have done for it already.'

'Oh Kirilof, what a delightful coward you are!' laughed the moribund man; 'upon my life, I am grateful to you for treating me to this last little bit of comedy! You are giving me a merry send-off! Cheer up, my friend; Doonya is all right; so is the cause; so are you, which is, I fancy, the main point of this heroic of yours! I shall give away none of my friends, don't fear; it isn't like me. I have a fad to do some one a good turn, that's all, and, in doing him this good turn, to safeguard Doonya at the same time; that's all, I swear it. So, for Heaven's sake, leave my bandages alone till I have done with the notary; let a man make a good end if he desires it. Come!'

Kirilof was but half-satisfied with this explanation; but further consultation was impossible, since at this moment the lawyer returned accompanied by a retiring and very grimy-looking policeman, who first crossed himself vehemently as his eyes fell upon the wounded man, and then expectorated with equal vehemence. It may be added that he kept up both actions steadily and in strict rotation during the whole time he was present in the chamber.

'Now, Mr Notary,' said Colya, 'are you ready? Pen and paper of the best, please; you will admit that the quality of the materials should be good when you hear me begin.'

'I am all ready,' said the notary, 'and I dare say my paper is good enough; it is the usual legal stuff.'

'Write then from my dictation: To His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Alexander II., Tsar of all the Russias, Poland, Finland, and all manner of other places and things which rightly belong to other people. Have you got that?'

The notary glanced at Kirilof in order to gather from the doctor's face some light as to whether he was to take down the words of this

dying lunatic. Kirilof, sitting on the couch beside Colya, gave a gesture of assent. After all, Colya might enjoy a dying bit of foolery, so long as it was harmless; means could be found, if necessary, to secure that his dictated nonsense went no farther than the stove door once he was dead! The gendarme continued his expectorations freely; you could judge of the workings of his mind by the loudness and frequency of those exercises.

Colya continued to recite:

'Your Majesty may recall a certain episode which occurred four years ago or more, close to the Summer Gardens, when your most Gracious and Christian Person was shot at and unfortunately missed by a person in the crowd. Two individuals were quickly arrested and imprisoned in the fortress. One of these was actually the author of the attempt; the other was the individual to whose action your Majesty owes its invaluable existence. One fired, while the other turned aside the bullet. With beautiful impartiality both were punished as criminals. Your Majesty will understand that, in my natural anger with the officious person who by pushing my arm interfered with my intentions with regard to your sacred person, I did not at that time take steps to justify my companion in misfortune; indeed I may say that I viewed with satisfaction your Majesty's treatment of your preserver, as welcome evidence of that splendid regard for justice which is the attribute of all kings, and of yourself especially. At the same time this person's presence in the fortress was convenient because your Majesty's officials were unwilling to hang both of us and too indolent to ascertain which of us could be hanged with propriety. Your Majesty will grieve to learn that I am now dying, stabbed by one of the members of your Majesty's secret-police force, while escorting an innocent lady through the streets of the city. Your Majesty will be glad to learn the name of your preserver, and as for me, I no longer possess any motive for concealing it, since in a few moments I shall pass out of the reach and jurisdiction of despots and autocracies. Accordingly, I hereby offer my affidavit that on my own initiative and for my own purposes, at the place and date afore-mentioned, I fired upon your Majesty, and that Alexander Philipof not only was innocent of connivance in the act, but actually turned aside the bullet, exactly as he affirmed at the time, thereby unfortunately preserving your Majesty's life; for which blunder he was very properly conveyed to prison and kept there for four years with other political offenders. There,' continued Colya, 'that ought to be a state document, to be preserved in the archives. Let me sign it, and you can read it over and witness it, all of you.'

The notary read over the ridiculous production, the last effort of foolishness and vanity of which poor foolish Colya should ever be guilty, and the paper was signed by all present and handed to the gendarme for delivery to the prefect at his district office. Then that official and the notary took their departure, and Kirilof remained to draw the curtain upon the tragedy-comedy of poor Colya's life. He did not have to wait long, for the little student soon sank after his supreme effort. He died perfectly happy, convinced that he was making an exemplary end,

and profoundly satisfied that his miserable failure of a life had been the brilliant career of a truly great and enlightened reformer.

CHAPTER XXI.

During the rapidly-moving events of the last hour or so, Philipof, though constantly in the society of his companion, whom he had heard addressed as Doonya, had had no leisure to observe her. When, however, Kirilof the surgeon left the pair in his apartment to consult as to their next move, Sasha had time to take a good look at the lady intrusted to his care, and was greatly struck with her appearance. Doonya, though not strictly beautiful, possessed a certain charm of expression which caused even those who knew her best to wonder, now and again, how it was that they had never noticed how extremely handsome she was. Her face was full of intelligence and sympathy; it was rather the face of a madonna than of a conspirator; and yet, judging from the circumstances under which he had met her and from the few words she had let fall, Philipof was obliged to conclude that a conspirator of some kind she was. Sasha had little sympathy with the conspiring order of minds; conspiracies were not at all in his line—quarrelling was; he was as combative as the most quarrelsome could desire; but he was averse to plots and intrigues, and he liked to conduct his quarrels in the open light of day. Philipof greatly approved of the appearance of his new friend, and for this reason was anxious to put himself right with her without delay. He therefore plunged 'into the middle of things' as soon as Kirilof had left the coast clear. 'My name is Philipof,' he said, 'and I was once an officer in a first-rate infantry regiment—the Okhotsk. I think the student whom you called Colya may have explained to you how it is that I am no longer attached to that corps; and this exhausts my personal history. Can you tell me anything about yourself? It is as well that I should know who and what you are, in order that I may be enabled to judge what to do with you, and whom to fear, and what hiding-places to avoid.'

Doonya gazed earnestly into his eyes for a moment, then she smiled and blushed a little. 'I see you are to be trusted,' she said, 'and therefore, though I am entirely ignorant of your views, I shall tell you who is the dangerous person you have been asked to protect. Since you found me in the society of Nicholas Smirnof, of whom you know something, you will not be surprised to learn that I am one of the Discontented.' Doonya paused, as though expecting some comment upon this revelation.

'I guessed that much,' Philipof observed. 'Are you as—as extreme in your views as he ?'

'You would say, if you were not too polite, "Are you as mad as poor Colya?" No, I do not lay claim to anything like the energy and enthusiasm of our poor student, though I belong to the same secret society of which he is also a member. Colya was always a trouble to the chiefs of his party, for he was ever in favour of extreme measures, and had no patience with those who advocated more peaceful methods of agitating for needed reforms. You will be surprised to hear that he was chosen for the work he endeavoured

but failed to do nearly five years ago, not so much because the Society wanted the Tsar out of the way, but because Colya was a trouble to the party, and the party therefore wanted *him* out of the way. It seems unkind to say so; but there are those of the brotherhood who will not be sorry to hear of to-night's catastrophe.' It was a relief to Philipof's mind to learn that Doonya was, as she expressed it, not so mad as the wounded Nicholas Smirnof.

'But how come you to meddle with politics; especially with so dangerous a school of politicians as this with which you appear to be connected?' he asked. 'I beg your pardon,' he added, seeing that his companion appeared distressed; 'I have no right to ask it; forgive me, and leave the question unanswered.'

'No; you have every right to an answer,' said Doonya, smiling; 'and I have no objection to confiding my secret to you, except that the story is to me somewhat painful. My mother was a very beautiful woman'—

'That I can very easily believe,' said Philipof politely.

'The daughter of a Moscow bourgeois. One day the late Tsar Nicholas—I think it was the year before he became Tsar—saw and noticed my mother as she entered the church of St Michael. The Tsarevitch was struck with her beauty, and sent an aide-de-camp to learn her name and address. Shortly after this a situation was offered to my mother in the palace; it was a respectable situation. I think it was that of superintendent of the table and bed linen, and the salary was high. My mother accepted it gladly, for trade was bad, and her old father would be thankful for the assistance she would now be enabled to offer him. But very soon my poor grandfather was suddenly overtaken by misfortune. The police invaded his premises and accused him of selling merchandise which was not what it pretended to be, and of passing false money, and other malpractices, of all of which he was entirely innocent. Grandfather went to Siberia, and died there, none of his relations ever seeing him again; and my mother, after a long and shameful course of persecution at the palace, escaped and married my father, an officer in a regiment of the line. The Tsar never forgave my mother, and my poor father suffered for it. He received neither favour nor justice in his profession, promotion never came his way—poverty and persecution did, and he died broken-hearted while I was a small child. Mother died also, and I was left to look after myself—very learned in the political opinions of the injured and oppressed, and an easy prey to those who sought recruits for the great army of the Discontented, of whom there are very many in poor, distracted Russia.'

'Thank you,' said Philipof; 'it is kind of you to open your heart in this way to a stranger. I belong to no secret society, though I too am one of the Discontented; but you need fear nothing from me; your story is perfectly safe in my keeping.'

'I knew that at first sight,' said Doonya, smiling; 'and, besides, having saved me to-night from I know not what horrors, you are entitled to know anything you care to know about me. I shall be in terrible danger from to-night, and if you are wise you will only help me to find some place of concealment and then leave me to my

fate, for I shall be a source of danger to my friends, and I would not have you come to any further harm because of us; you have already suffered enough for the brotherhood, thanks to poor Nicholas Smirnof.'

'Nay, I have nothing further to lose,' said Philipof somewhat bitterly; 'circumstances have stripped me of all that made life worth living. I am grateful to you for providing me with a new interest in life. Can you tell me of what or of whom you are in particular danger at present, and why you were attacked to-night?'

'There is something in the air; some enterprise being deliberated upon by the heads of our party; and the police, who have spies everywhere, have got wind of it. The more moderate of us are not consulted when there is talk of violence, though we are equally bound to all decisions arrived at in council. Nicholas, though not moderate, was not consulted either, because he was too impulsive, and was capable of ruining the best-laid plans by ill-timed individual action. There had been a general meeting this evening, after the conclusion of which all but the innermost circle were dismissed. Colya and I were walking home together when we were attacked. Had you not rescued me I should have been tortured in order to disclose the proceedings of the council. The police had wind of the council, but failed to find the rendezvous, or were unable to obtain admittance; therefore they pounced upon us in hopes to discover from us all the particulars of the plot they suspect. God knows,' Doonya ended, covering her face with her hands, 'what would have become of me if you had not rescued me, Gospodin Philipof. May God reward you for it, I believe in God, you see, and in many other things which our inner circle deny altogether.'

'Good again,' said Philipof; 'I am rejoiced that this is so. Now, I will tell you what I have in my mind. It appears to me that you would be far safer out of the country than in it, and—'

'Oh no, no, no!' interrupted Doonya; 'I could not leave Russia for many reasons! I must lie hid for a while; that is all that is necessary.'

'That is how we will begin at all events,' continued Philipof. 'Now it so happens that I can offer you a convenient sanctuary, if you are not too particular as to accommodation, where neither the police bloodhounds nor your inconvenient friends of the brotherhood are in the least likely to look for you—in the cabin of one of the grain barges, whose loadings and dischargings I superintend for an English firm of exporters. The skipper of one of these barges is a married man and a capital fellow; he shall give you a share of the cabin occupied by himself and his wife. He can sleep on top of the grain in the hold and she shall look after you. I shall represent you as my sister and as anxious for solitude and a little sea-air. You will not mind a trip or two to Cronstadt and back?'

Doonya clapped her hands with delight.

'Come!' she said; 'it is splendid. God bless you again, Gospodin Philipof—let us go at once; I am nervous to-night and upset. Do you know, when that policeman held me and I thought I should not escape, I saw in my mind a sight Vera Markova once showed me—she is one of our set—her back and shoulders all scored and torn with the knot; she had been through the examination

by scourge. That is what I might have suffered; but I should not have borne it as Vera did. I should have given every name and betrayed every secret. I could not bear it, Gospodin Philipof; let us go at once into safety!' Poor Doonya was white and trembling at the recollection of her escape; she had seized Philipof's hand convulsively, and was dragging him into the street.

It was past one o'clock and the town was deserted save for here and there the usual drunken brawlers and a few policemen and *isvoschiks* (droshka drivers). Philipof engaged one of these last and got himself driven to the grain wharfs, or rather to a point close to these. Here he alighted with Doonya, and, avoiding night watchmen and sleepy warehousemen, guided his companion through a maze of barges and lighters of every size and shape until the particular craft he sought was reached. The skipper was absent, probably on bacchanalian business, but his wife was fast asleep within the tiny cabin below. This lady, to her inexpressible astonishment, was awaked by the superintendent and requested to make room for a visitor; but with the unquestioning docility of the Russian peasant she obeyed at once and made no remarks, excepting an audible prayer which accompanied the invariable sign of the cross. It must be all right, she reflected, since authority, in the person of Mr Superintendent, ordained it. When Philipof placed a rouble in her hand and bade her take good care of the lady and say nothing about her presence to any single creature in the world if she valued her place, or her husband's, the good woman was more than ever convinced that everything was perfectly natural and in order.

Then Philipof bade his charge good-night and hastened homewards, feeling wonderfully content and happy—more so than he had felt for five years. Life seemed to have an object once more, and his grievances retired for once into the background.

DELAGOA BAY.

By JOHN GEDDIE.

A GLANCE at the map of South Africa reveals some of the reasons why Delagoa Bay is accounted a key of the political situation in that part of the world. In its immediate neighbourhood meet the territories of three out of the four civilised Powers that share among them the region lying south of the Zambesi. The fourth—Germany—would welcome nothing more gladly than a chance of planting itself in this strategic spot, and ousting from thence Briton, Boer, and Portuguese. For Delagoa Bay is the finest and most capacious harbour on the east coast of Africa. Its geographical position makes it the nearest point of access to the rich gold-bearing and farming lands of the Transvaal, and the natural outlet of its trade. With Pretoria, Lourenço Marques is already connected by a line of railway, which, for political, fiscal, and other reasons, is specially favoured by the government of the Transvaal State. Within the last few years the volume and value of its commerce have vastly increased. Quays, streets, and public buildings have started up out of the swamp, and strips of foreshore that but lately might have been had for an old song are bid for at ransom prices by competing syndicates.

It is, however, the future rather than the present facts of the trade of the Bay and port that engage the thoughts of statesmen and commercial speculators. Another generation will find it of immeasurably greater importance than it is to-day. It must grow up with the magnificent country on the tablelands behind it, and a large part of the traffic and intercourse with the British colony in Rhodesia, as well as with the South African Republic, is likely to pass through Delagoa Bay. This it is that explains why an obscure and unhealthy nook of Africa should twice have been the subject of international arbitrations, one of them still pending; why its history is to be found embalmed in many blue-books; why it should from time to time be made the subject of parliamentary discussion and of alarmist newspaper paragraphs, telling of the intrigues of this or that Power to secure it by seizure or purchase; why everybody understood the significance of the step when, at the crisis of the recent difficulties with the Transvaal, a British squadron was moved to Delagoa Bay.

It may be asked how it is that we were so long in discovering the importance of Delagoa Bay, and especially how it came about that, after having it partly in our hands, we should have let it go again. The same question might be put, and would elicit a still more unsatisfactory reply, concerning the other breaks in the continuity and stability of our South African Empire—as, for instance, the two Boer Republics lying north and south of the Vaal, both of which were for a time under the British flag. Rulers and governments, especially when they have to exercise control from so great a distance off as Downing Street, cannot be expected to look deeply into the future, or to fully appreciate all the bearings of local facts. South African progress, it must also be remembered, has been made not only at infinite trouble, but at enormous cost to the home country. There have been times—happily the present is not one of them—when, through native wars and Dutch worries, the Imperial Cabinet and the nation have been 'sick of South Africa.'

Who could have foretold, when her Majesty came to the throne, the immense significance which Delagoa Bay would attain before her reign was over? At that time settlement from the south had barely reached the Orange River; much of the Cape Colony was still unexplored desert—a wild game preserve as yet untouched by civilised man. The discontented Boers were only preparing for their 'trek' into the unknown regions beyond the Gariep; in Natal, Dingaan ruled with authority undisputed in the room of his father, Chaka; Mosilikatse and his Matabele were the lords of the present Transvaal Republic; and a third Zulu power, the Gaza tribe, were in possession of the country adjoining Delagoa Bay. Portugal slept an enchanted sleep on the strip of East Africa which she claimed on the strength of discoveries made by her navigators nearly three centuries ago, and of dubious treaties with the 'Emperor of Monomotapa'—a sleep from which she has only lately been awakened by the activity of other Powers. Her authority in 1837 did not extend beyond the range of the guns of her military posts; and Lourenço Marques had a little before failed even to keep at bay the assegais of the Zulus.

It is unnecessary to enter far into the question of the conflicting claims of Portugal and of Great Britain to the southern side of Delagoa Bay—the Portuguese right to the territory north of the Espiritu Santo (the name given to the estuary of the Umbelosi River), including the site of Lourenço Marques, was not disputed by us. The matter was judicially decided by Marshal MacMahon's award in 1875. Dr McCall Theal is probably right in his opinion that both claims were weak, but that that of Portugal was the more skilfully presented. It rested chiefly on the ground of original discovery and of intermittent occupation; that of Britain on more recent annexation and concession by native tribes. The decision turned much on the interpretation to be given to an old treaty between Portugal and Great Britain, in which the territories of the former were defined as extending 'from Cape Delgado to the Bay of Lourenço Marques,' which Portugal contended must embrace the whole shores of that bay.

It was discovered in 1502 by Antonio da Campo, the commander of one of the vessels of Vasco da Gama's squadron, whose ship, becoming disabled, put in for shelter at this spacious inlet. From the natives, with whom the Portuguese began intercourse in characteristic fashion by kidnapping, a rumour seems to have been gathered of a great lake in the interior; and under the impression that the centre stream of Espiritu Santo estuary flowed from this imaginary reservoir, the discoverers bestowed on these waters the name of Bahia da Lagoa—the 'Bay of the Lake'—which in a modified form it still bears. One gathers from the narratives of the Portuguese voyagers that the native tribes dwelling between the Bay and the Cape Colony were very different, in their political and tribal divisions at least, from the Kaffir races that now occupy the region. A shipwrecked crew that traversed the distance nearly a hundred years later than Da Campo's time met with not a single tribe bearing the same name as that of any now existing; African dynasties are of still briefer duration than those of Europe.

Portugal's interest in the district was confined to trading in ivory, slaves, and gold-dust that even then came down in small quantities from the interior. No attempt was made to exercise control over the natives, nor do objections appear to have been raised when other nations—the Dutch and the British—began to visit the Bay. Thus when in 1721 an expedition from Holland, attracted by the report of gold-mines in the back country, landed and built a fort—on the site of what is now Lourenço Marques—they were left unmolested, and only abandoned it some years later on account of lack of trade and the unhealthiness of the spot. The Dutch, to whose rights in South Africa this country afterwards succeeded, were therefore the first to attempt the permanent occupation of Delagoa Bay; for hitherto Lourenço Marques—so called from a trader who visited the spot in 1545—had been but a place of call and barter for the ivory and slave merchants, and for an occasional official from Mozambique. It was not until 1781 that the Portuguese founded a station on the site of the old Dutch fort, and it was not until after the present reign began that the present town of Lourenço Marques took its rise.

By many claims and acts the Portuguese had asserted their right to this northern side of the Bay. But it was supposed that its southern shores, with the Bay islands, were still open to occupation; and they lay within the limits of the twenty-fifth degree of latitude, up to which in other directions the British authority established at the Cape was supposed to extend. The first indication given on the part of this country that the prospective value of Delagoa Bay was recognised was when, in 1822, the surveying expedition of Captain Owen entered it, and receiving from the Portuguese commandant of the fort the assurance that the natives were not subject to the Lisbon Government, proceeded to accept the cession by the chief Mazeta of the land lying along the Tembe River, and from Makasane of the country between the Maputa and the sea. At the same time, as Dr Theal observes, new names were affixed to localities; the estuary of the Espiritu Santo was dubbed English River; the Da Lagoa became the Dundas, which has in turn been driven out by the old Bantu name of the Umbelosi.

So far were the Portuguese from being in a position at this period to combat the British claims, that they were themselves, ten years later, driven from their fort by the warriors of the Gaza tribe. The question of the ownership of Delagoa Bay did not, indeed, excite any interest until the emigrant Dutch farmers had moved into the country between the Vaal and the Limpopo, with British authority following hard on the heels of these runaway subjects of the Crown, as the law then regarded them. They began eagerly looking out for some access to the sea that would make them finally independent of controlling hands and troublesome taxes, to seek escape from which they had fled into the wilderness. Natal was closed to them when it was made into a British colony. The next opening to sea and to the world was through Delagoa Bay; and in that direction the eyes of the Boers became more and more fixed. Other eyes, however, were turned towards the same quarter. As the Boers trekked northward into these dry and healthy uplands, whose mineral wealth was as yet unsuspected, British authority felt itself compelled to move after them, reluctantly and with many halts, and by interposing between them and the sea, prevent the introduction of new elements that disturbed our native policy and might jeopardise our hold on South Africa. It was in pursuance of this policy that Captain Bickford, of H.M.S. *Narcissus*, in 1861 raised the British flag on Inhak and Elephant Islands, and proclaimed the adjoining territory annexed to the colony of Natal.

Then, indeed, moved thereto partly by the Republic founded beyond the Vaal, whose independence had been recognised seven years before by the Sand River Convention, Portugal took measures to assert her rights, and in order to strengthen her case, took care to acquire whatever territorial claims had been already put forward in this quarter by the Boers. The outcome of it all was the arbitration, the effect of which has already been described; it gave to Portugal more territory, lying to the south of the Bay, than she had asked for.

Thus at an early stage of this interesting game of Empire we had apparently lost one of the

trump cards. Not entirely, however, for in the course of the negotiations that preceded the arbitration a pledge was obtained from Portugal that she would not part with the territory in dispute to any other Power until she had given Britain the refusal of the acquisition on the same terms—a pledge which, as we shall see, has since been confirmed, defined, and extended. But the fact is that in 1872, when arbitration was agreed upon, few people in Africa or in Europe dreamed that any other Power would attempt to gain a footing in the region between the Zambesi and the Cape. Enlightenment came when, some twelve or thirteen years later, Prince Bismarck, having completed the unification of Germany and rid himself of other home cares, began to look abroad in search of a colonial empire, and through his agents set the example of the ‘scramble for Africa.’

In the meantime the Transvaal State had fallen into anarchy and bankruptcy; and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, with a few policemen at his back, had stepped across the frontier, and had annexed it to the British Crown. The military power of the Zulus had been encountered and broken in the coast country between Natal and Delagoa Bay. Again the winning cards were in our hands; but again they were given up or endangered. The Transvaal was surrendered to the insurgent Boers, under burden, however, of suzerain rights, since modified into an oversight of foreign policy. Zululand was parcelled out among thirteen native kinglets. And no sooner had we acted with this prodigal generosity than we found reason to repent our want of foresight. By a piece of diplomatic sharp practice, Germany cut out for herself a huge cantle of territory in South-west Africa. Economically worthless, it is politically of the nature of a thorn in our side. Its importance has been largely nullified by the fact that we still hold the one useful harbour on this coast, Walfish Bay, and that our advance in Bechuanaland, covering the trade-route to the north, has effectually cut off German territory from the Boer Republics.

Very different, however, was the situation on the eastern side, where only a comparatively narrow band of coast country interposed between the Transvaal and the Indian Ocean. From without and from within sedulous efforts were made to break through this barrier. Herr Lüderitz, the founder of Angra-Pequena, attempted to plant another German colony in St Lucia Bay, but was starved out. The Boers have broken the Convention line, and have eaten their way through a good part of Zululand towards the sea. The rest of it we have been in time to place definitely under our flag; and by agreement with Portugal we have joined up the territories of the two Powers, by parting Tongaland between them. The recent surrender of Swaziland to the Pretoria Government has brought it nearer than ever to Delagoa Bay; and the Transvaal had also the opportunity of acquiring ‘way-leave’ for an alternative line of railway and of access to the sea through British Tongaland to Kosi Bay, as a condition of joining a South African Customs Union.

But fate and circumstances have in the meantime diverted these schemes and made Lourenço Marques more than ever the ‘vulnerable point’

of South-east Africa. Three main factors have yet to be mentioned—the railway, the gold discoveries of the Rand, and the extension of British settlement and authority throughout the region from the Limpopo to Lake Tanganyika. The Delagoa Bay railway question is a long and perplexed one; it is still under arbitration at Geneva, and the award has not yet been pronounced as to the amount of compensation due to the American and British projectors and investors, on account of the high-handed action of the Portuguese Government in seizing the line on the ground of the expiry of the contracted time for completion. But the railway itself is an important political as well as commercial fact. In carrying it through the Limpopo Range and the swamp-lands beneath, great engineering difficulties had to be overcome. On it, under its Boer-Hollander management, President Kruger relies as one of his mainstays against that inrush of British influence which has come along with the wealth drawn in almost fabulous quantity from the quartz-veins of the Rand. This last it is that feeds, and must continue to feed, the trade of Lourenço Marques and increase the importance of Delagoa Bay—that counteracts all the obstacles, in the shape of the pestilential climate, the surrounding swamp and forest, the tsetse fly, and, last but not least, the *vis inertiae* of Portuguese officialdom, that before stood in the way of its prosperity. It has stimulated also those stories, current on the Continent, of a project by which, under cover of an extension of the charter and powers of the Mozambique Company, the administrative and fiscal control of the Bay would be placed in the joint hands of the Transvaal Government and of a syndicate of Berlin capitalists—in breach of the spirit, at least, of the London Convention and of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of June 1891, under which the right of pre-emption is extended to all the possessions of Portugal south of the Zambesi.

These documents are among the strong cards that are left us; and they need to be played with care and finesse as well as vigour. But besides and beyond, as assurance that no lever inserted at Delagoa Bay or elsewhere will break up our South African Empire, there is the northern spread of British settlement and enterprise, up to and beyond the Zambesi; there is our paramount power on the sea. Who holds the sea holds Delagoa Bay, and South Africa, ‘in the hollow of his hand.’

‘AND PARTY.’

By H. F. ABELL.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

JOHN THOMPSON, late (not very late) sergeant in Her Majesty's 200th, now coachman to Colonel Oxenden, also late of the 200th, now of the Grange, Piddleham, Hopsshire, was hurrying towards Thrudown Hall, residence of Squire Lomax, two miles away, with a note. He was hurrying as fast as his vorliness and the ice-bound roads would let him, partly to keep himself warm, and partly because it was past twelve o'clock mid-day, and upon his leaving the Grange gates strident female voice had commanded him to be on no account late for the family meal at one.

John Thompson had passed the 'Golden Ball Inn'—a rare performance on his part—and had but a few hundred yards to go when he saw sauntering from the direction of Thrusdown Hall a tall, good-looking man of five and forty or thereabouts, with whose figure he seemed to be familiar, and so he shifted the note from his left hand to his right, and prepared to give the military salute.

It is a small world, and as John Thompson got nearer, he said to himself :

'Blessed if it ain't!—But no, it can't be. But it is!—Blessed if it ain't the black captaining!'

The two figures met. Thompson, being in a hurry, would have passed on with a salute, but the other stopped him with a cheery

'Why, Thompson, who'd have thought of running across you here? What are you doing?'

'Coachman to Colonel Oxenden, sir,' replied the old sergeant at stiff attention.

'The deuce you are! Why, I didn't know he'd come to vegetate down here. Well, how do you like it? He was considered a hard one, wasn't he?'

'He kep' up the name of the regiment, sir,' replied the sergeant.

'Yes, yes, of course. Well now, tell me about yourself,' said the captain, crossing his leg, and leaning on his stick with the air of a man ready for a long chat.

'Perhaps you'll excuse me, sir,' replied the sergeant; 'I've a most particular note here to deliver at the 'all, sir. The mistress is took with the influenza, sir, and they can't come to the ball at Squire Lomax's to-morrow night.'

'Dear me! I'm sorry for that. I'm staying at the Hall for the ball, and I should have tried to meet the colonel again after so many years. Any answer to the note?'

'No, sir. Leastways I hadn't orders to wait for one. But I had oughter be getting on, sir, with your leave.'

'Give me the note. I'm going back to lunch now, and the squire shall have it directly he comes in.'

'You're very good, sir, thank you. It would save me a quarter of an hour.'

So the sergeant handed the note to the captain, saluted, and was making the right-about turn when the captain said :

'Oh, I say, Thompson, don't say you've seen me. I'll drop in and surprise the colonel—perhaps this afternoon.'

'Very well, sir. Good-morning, sir.'

And back he trotted, much relieved that he would be in time for dinner, and would thus stave off the emptying upon his head of the vials of Mrs Thompson's wrath, which nothing could excite more effectually than the spoiling of a dinner on account of unpunctuality.

But for John Lomax the world in this corner of Hopsshire would have jogged very drowsily and unevenly on its road. Although not ranking with, or pretending to rank with the established Hopsshire families—that is, with people who, having lived on the soil for a few generations, regarded every more recent arrival as an intruder, he did a great deal more for his neighbourhood than did most of the elect for theirs. Blessed with an ample fortune, he made

the best use of it—contributed to the well-being and happiness of all around him. Hence, the two dances he gave during the winter season were affairs of a great deal more than local importance, and local caste was annually regulated by the fact of having been or not having been invited to them.

'Colonel and Mrs Oxenden and party' were, of course, regularly invited, and as the colonel and the squire and their respective ladies were, although living within two miles of each other, close friends, the regret of the Colonel and Mrs Oxenden at being disappointed at the last minute were as genuine as was that of the squire and Mrs Lomax that they could not come.

'The poor thing has evidently written the note from her sick-room,' remarked Mrs Lomax. 'She writes so beautifully as a rule, and this is not at all her hand. She hopes we will welcome her "party" a great friend of her husband's, Major Clifford.'

'Of course we will,' said the squire; 'we have none too many men as it is, and the colonel's friends are always good fellows.'

At eleven o'clock the next night the old-fashioned hall at the squire's, converted into a ballroom, presented a pleasant and brilliant scene. Everybody worth knowing for miles around was there, and the neighbourhood was famous for pretty girls, although it deplored, in common with most rural districts, a paucity of young men. The music was good, the floor was good, the room was well-lighted, all the company danced, and the old house, with its numberless nooks and corners, was admirably adapted for these between-dance *tête-à-têtes* which are the most fatal nets for susceptible youth.

Major Clifford had arrived early, and with that ease which the social side of military life so generally teaches, was very soon as much at home in this room full of people whom he had never seen in his life before as a native of the soil. Stay—there was one person with whom he seemed to be acquainted. This was a stylish woman of between thirty and forty, whose face, which had been beautiful, bore upon it that impress of hardness and indifference which so surely comes after a life in the world. When Clifford entered the room she saw him, and the colour fled from her cheeks in an instant. When he saw her, he raised his eyebrows and smiled, very slightly, but meaningly. He was afterwards introduced to Mrs Enderby, but he did not ask her for a dance nor did they meet again during the evening.

The principal object of his attention was the squire's youngest daughter, Hetty, a pretty girl of eighteen, who was evidently as much attracted by the quiet, well-bred talk and manner of the Grange representative as he was impressed by her charms.

That he had already danced with her three times, and the night was yet young, had not escaped the notice of Mrs Lomax, who at once with maternal solicitude, and with a wise maternal air of indifference, set to work to find out all about him. In this she signally failed, for she happened not to ask the only person in the room who really did know anything about him.

After Major Clifford's third waltz with Hetty Lomax he led her upstairs to one of the before-alluded-to alcoves, a dainty little corner, luxu-

riously cushioned, screened from the vulgar gaze by artfully-arranged greenery, and dimly lit by a quaint Japanese lantern.

‘You must be very fond of this old house,’ he said.

‘I am ; I love it. And indeed it is an interesting old place. I believe it is historical, but I am ashamed to say you must not examine me too closely as to this. At any rate it has a ghost.’

‘Good ! One of the usual English country-house ghosts, I suppose,’ said the major. ‘Party in white, with a pale face, sad eyes, and all the rest of it?’

‘No. It is a man in a long cloak, and he haunts the landing outside mother’s bedroom door.’

‘How interesting !’

‘Do you think so ? Well, I suppose there’s too much of the New Woman in me to see the fascination of ghosts. But come and see his scene of action.’

So the major followed the girl up the broad staircase, at the top of which she turned to the left, and entered a dimly-lighted region of nooks and corners, and sharp turns, and steps which went up, and others which went down, until she stopped opposite a door which she opened, saying :

‘This is mother’s room.’

Major Clifford peeped respectfully into a large lofty room, no small portion of which was occupied by one of those funereal beds in which our ancestors loved to entomb themselves with such ceremony night after night. Otherwise the room was simply the perfectly-appointed sleeping-chamber of a refined Englishwoman.

‘The ghost comes along the passage,’ whispered the girl, with a mock air of awe and mystery, ‘enters the room, walks up to the dressing-table in the bow-window, stands for a moment, and walks back.’

She looked at her companion as she spoke, and noting that his keen dark eyes were taking in every detail of the room, said :

‘Yes ; it’s awfully untidy. I see you’re looking at it ; but we didn’t finish dinner until late, and there was rather a rush to get ready for the dance.’

‘I suppose the ghost is so far orthodox that he only pays these visits at certain fixed times ?’ said the major.

‘O dear, no !’ replied the girl. ‘He comes at all sorts of odd times. He’s been seen here in broad daylight.’

‘Have you ever seen him ?’ asked the soldier.

‘No—but—oh, I say, there’s the music, and my partner will be hunting for me high and low !’ exclaimed the girl.

So they hastened back to the dancing room.

‘We are engaged for number fifteen, I think ?’ said the major, as he resigned Hetty to her partner.

Hetty nodded and smiled, and they separated.

On the eve of number fifteen dance, more than half an hour later, Hetty said to Major Clifford :

‘I’m going to ask you a favour.’

‘Consider it as granted,’ said the major, bowing.

‘Do you mind sitting out this dance with me ? I want to ask you something.’

‘With pleasure. Shall we go to our alcove ?’

‘Yes.’

So they slipped away as soon as the dance was

fairly begun, and ascended the stair to the retreat under the leaves.

‘You know Mrs Enderby, I think ?—I mean you have met her before this evening ?’ said the girl when they were seated.

The major bowed affirmation.

‘Who is she ?’

‘Wife of Enderby of the P. W. D. He’s on the frontier. I met them at Dum dum three or four years ago. Why do you ask ?’

‘Because she has been asking about you.’

‘Well ?’

‘And of course all I could say was that I had never met you before this evening, and that you were staying at Colonel Oxenden’s.’

‘Does she know the colonel ?’

‘No. She is the “And Party” from the Towers at Crashford. That fat man and the florid woman are her introducers—Mr and Mrs Carnegie. We don’t know much about them, but mother always asks them to one of our dances. Now, Major Clifford, don’t answer this question unless you choose, and don’t think me impertinent for asking it. Has she any particular reason to dislike you ?’

The major examined his shoes, and did not reply for a moment. Then he said :

‘She ought not to have—certainly not. But why do you ask ?’

‘Well, there was something in the tone of her inquiries about you, not in what she actually said, which made me wonder,’ replied the girl.

‘What did she say ?’

‘She asked who you were—who “that cavalry-looking man” was, she put it, and how long you had lived in these parts, and what you were doing now that you had left the service.’

‘Left the service ? Who told her I had left the service ? Well, anyhow, there’s nothing very spiteful in all that.’

‘No. But, as I said, women always judge what other women mean, not from the actual words they use, but from their way of saying them.’

‘Well, Miss Lomax, so far from having a spite against me, Mrs Enderby ought to regard me as a very great benefactor, although I say so who should not.’

‘Why—did you save her life, or what ?’

‘No—I—er—saved something which is often more precious than life.’

‘Will you explain, Major Clifford ?’

The major hesitated, as if balancing in his mind the course he should pursue. Then, with a sudden movement, he changed his leaning-forward posture for an erect position, and facing full his companion, said :

‘Miss Lomax, as Mrs Enderby has given you the idea of being spiteful to me, and she may possibly say something spiteful about me, I must take you into my confidence. Now please understand that only upon your assurance that what I say shall go no further, I will tell you what I know about Mrs Enderby.’

The girl gave the required assurance.

‘Mrs Enderby was very well known in India as a woman who thoroughly meant to enjoy life, and in India that is associated with a good deal that in England is considered fast. She preferred the society of men—of a certain style of men—to that of women, and was known as the Gay Grass Widow everywhere, and entered heart and

soul into their pursuits. Well, there was a good deal of high play at the station just then.'

'Card-play do you mean?'

The major nodded, and continued.

'Men can't be blamed for seeking excitement when they're exiled away in a bad climate, hundreds of miles from life; nor can women, when they keep within bounds, but Mrs Enderby went the pace. At any rate, she was always at the baccarat table, and she won so consistently that I watched her, and—I don't think I need say any more.'

'I'm afraid I'm very stupid,' said the girl. 'What then?'

'Well—she didn't play quite as ladies and gentlemen are usually supposed to play.'

'You don't mean to say that she cheated?'

'I do. But, Miss Lomax, please remember—she had her lesson. I spoke to her quietly about it. She renounced the cards, became another woman, and is, I believe, an excellent wife and a devoted mother. There! I'm sorry to tell such a story about a guest in your house, but in self-defence I must, for, of course, she can never forgive me for having found her out. Let us change the topic.'

After supper Hetty Lomax came up to Major Clifford and said :

'Mrs Enderby and her friends have gone. Their excuse was that being such a fearful night, they were afraid the roads would be blocked with snow if they stayed later.'

'I'm afraid, then, that you think my presence here has something to do with their departure?' said the major.

'Well, I dare say she was uncomfortable,' replied Hetty.

The major and Miss Lomax were not together until the last dances on the programme came. When they met for the final waltz, the major said :

'Strange that you should have spoken about that ghost, for, as I was taking Miss Lemarchant to a seat in the uppermost alcove, during supper, I saw something very like your friend going along the passage from the direction of Mrs Lomax's room, although, if you hadn't told me it was a man, I should have called it a woman.'

'Probably one of the maids,' said Hetty, 'transformed by your imagination into a ghost.'

After the dance the major took his leave, and Hetty Lomax heard with genuine regret that he was leaving Colonel Oxenden's the next day for Ireland, for, although nothing approaching flirtation even had passed between them, he had won her esteem by his unaffected, easy manliness, his interesting talk, and lastly, perhaps not leastly, his perfect dancing. And so, charged with numberless messages to Colonel Oxenden and his invalid wife, the major went out into the wild wintry night.

The party broke up soon after his departure, but the story of the evening was not quite complete.

Hetty Lomax could not get Mrs Enderby out of her mind, and, unaccountably, with her she associated the feminine 'ghost' seen by Major Clifford. Some impulse sent her flying up to her mother's room, whence she presently appeared, pale as death, and said to her mother, who was seated with her father discussing the dance :

'Mother, when you changed your dress after

dinner, did you leave your diamonds on the dressing-table?'

'Yes, dear—why?'

'Because they are gone!'

GARDENER AND POTTER.

WILLIAM MORRIS once described artists as men whose 'only idea of happy leisure was other work just as valuable to the world as their work-a-day work.' This same conception of 'happy leisure' must have been evolved by Firth of Kirkby Lonsdale, long years ago, for his spare time for the last ten years has been as fully occupied by beautiful and valuable work as his working hours.

Born at Thornhill near Dewsbury soon after Queen Victoria came to the throne, he was brought up as a gardener, and served in various situations in different places, among them Kirby Lonsdale, to which place an offer of the situation of gardener to a resident brought him about ten years ago. Soon after he had settled down, the first evening art classes were instituted there, under the auspices of the Home Arts and Industries Association; and Firth, who had already been led by the born artist's longing for self-expression to try his hand at stone-carving, was one of the first to join the wood-carving class, where his long-hidden talent soon showed itself. However, as his work in the drawing and modelling classes, which he was obliged to attend, showed that his real gift lay rather in modelling with his hands than with the carver's tools, he and some others were set to decorate the clay pots and vases obtained by the promoters of the classes (Mr and Mrs Alfred Harris) from a neighbouring pottery. The students tried their hands at pot-making as well as decorating, and some of Firth's attempts proved so successful that they were fired.

The difficulties attendant on the transit of such delicate wares six miles to and fro were so great, owing to the many breakages and heavy expense, that the attempt was on the point of being given up in despair when the position was saved by Firth himself, who constructed a wheel and obtained leave from the gas company to fire his pottery in a disused retort at their works. With these appliances he worked on steadily for some time, attending the drawing-class regularly, and studying all the antique models and photographs of Greek, Pompeian, French, and German pottery so abundantly supplied to him by his patrons. Eventually, as his talent proved itself well worth encouraging, a suitable kiln was provided for him, and he began to glaze and colour his pottery, in both of which arts he has made great progress, some of his colouring being worthy of all praise. After the persevering and patient study of years, his work is now excellent; and when one realises that his appliances and kilns are still 'home-made,' and that he has had no professional training in the management of his materials, even greater credit is due to him for the good and artistic pottery he produces. All is not plain sailing in a potter's life. Many are the mishaps in firing, and often in the past the labour of weeks has been utterly destroyed in the kiln. Still these disappointments, so heart-

rending in their frequent occurrence in earlier days through his ignorance of technical difficulties, are gradually being surmounted by patience and increased skill, and it is hoped that they will by degrees become less frequent and disastrous.

Year by year specimens of his work have been exhibited at the annual exhibition of the Home Arts and Industries Association, where they have invariably gained awards and medals, the climax having been reached in 1895, when he carried off the association's much-coveted gold cross. They have also received many favourable notices at the numerous local exhibitions to which they have been sent during the last few years. One of his finest vases was presented to the Duchess of York on her marriage by a member of parliament, and the Princess of Wales and several other members of the Royal Family have specimens of his work bought by themselves at various times. The crowning triumph, however, which his skill has achieved came to him through the purchase of eight vases, adapted by him from classic forms, by the South Kensington Museum Science and Art Department, and the Schools of Art at Birmingham and Leicester, as models for their students.

Some years ago he ceased to garden for others, starting a small market-garden of his own, and dividing his time between it and the pottery. Within the last year, that also has been given up, the demand for his pots being so great that the due carrying out of orders requires all his time. As he has now three kilns and a good wheel, constructed for him by a young engineer, he is quite able to keep pace with the demand, and his business is rapidly becoming a financial success. A son, having developed a decided turn for the craft, has been taken into the workshop, and between them they produce a simple pottery which is steadily improving in design and quality.

Firth's success, though so entirely the reward of his own talent and painstaking energy, is in a large degree due to the help given him by the Home Arts and Industries Association's classes which he attended. Without the excellent tuition in modelling he gained there, and the ample supply of models so generously lent him, he could never have gained the knowledge essential to the development of his talent, or have become acquainted with the fine specimens of ancient art upon which his own work has been built up. He is no isolated instance of the value of the instruction provided by such classes. Throughout the kingdom there are craftsmen and craftswomen doing beautiful and valuable work, who owe the foundation of their success to the unwearyed labour bestowed on instructing them in the elementary principles of design and of the special craft they have taken up, by men and women themselves the possessors and valuers of culture and knowledge. Many such are voluntarily spending their own leisure in thus sharing their knowledge with their poorer neighbours, the conditions of whose work necessarily prevent them from going far afield to acquire the training they need to enable them to make use of the talents they possess.

Gardeners, as a class, have much leisure during the winter months, and that some of them spend it wisely is well known. No more beautiful baskets are made in the world than some sent to

the first exhibition of the Scottish Home Industries at Aberdeen by a gardener at Broughty Ferry, and all over the northern kingdom gardener's baskets made by themselves are excellent in form and quality. Professor Herkomer's drawing-room is adorned by an exquisite piece of modelled copper, the work of *his* gardener, and many possess prizes won for proficiency in wood-carving. In fact there is no class of men who have a better chance of developing artistic qualities if they choose to take it, their actual daily work bringing them into contact with Nature in all her beauty of form and colour, thus providing for them the very training which all artists regard as absolutely essential to their own success.

BRANDY-FARMING IN CHARENTE.

It was my first day at Cognac. I was sitting at a window in the Hôtel de France looking at the statue of Francis the First, which forms the centrepiece of the square, when I was startled by a rapid series of detonations which I took at first to be pistol-shots. Visions of promiscuous shooting of a kind common in Nevada flashed across me. I made cautiously for the door and looked out gingerly into the street. Then the source of the mysterious noises was revealed to me. It was nothing more formidable than a country farmer driving his long, narrow cart, with two tubs of brandy of his own distilling, to one of the big firms, and announcing his approach by a series of tremendous cracks from his long-lashed whip. The French peasantry, I may remark by the way, are inordinately fond of cracking their whips, and perform the feat with great dexterity; it is a harmless amusement which, though it startles the stranger, has no perceptible effect on the lean and patient horses, which look as if they would hardly do more than wink even at 'the crack of doom.' Perched beside the farmer on the cart was his wife. A picturesque though homely couple they were; both of them as brown as gypsies and dressed in their 'Sunday best'—he in his broad-brimmed, low-crowned beaver, his white shirt, flowered waistcoat, and sky-blue coat; she in her simple stuff gown, neat and trim as only a French-woman can make herself, with the wonderful snow-white cap, the pride of the women of the Charente—a structure of towering height but flattened and squeezed at the sides till it looks like a half-collapsed fire-balloon.

Later in the day I made closer acquaintance with this worthy brandy-farmer, for I met him at the establishment of one of the big brandy-merchants to whom I had an introduction. He had just sold his brandy, and to judge by the smile of satisfaction on his shrewd, wrinkled, brown face, had got a good price for it. I tasted his brandy too—a perfectly colourless spirit, fiery and rough, but, I was told, of excellent quality, though it had, of course, to pass through various processes of refining and blending before it would be fit for consumption.

Perhaps it may be as well to state here that though a spirit called brandy is manufactured in many countries and of many different substances, *genuine* brandy is the product only of

the distillation of the grape. The finest and purest brandy in the world comes only from France, and from one particular department of France—Charente. Nay, I may be even more precise, and say from one particular district of that department, of which Cognac is the centre.

The brandy-merchants, whose names are famous over the world, have their establishments in Cognac, a little town of fifteen thousand inhabitants, nine hours' journey by rail from Paris. A quaint and picturesque old town it is, many parts of it of great antiquity; but even the modern portions have an antique appearance; for the stone used in building is white, and, being soft and porous, quickly absorbs the alcoholic fumes with which the air is impregnated, so that a new house will turn black outside within ten years of its erection. There are hard knots in the stone, however, which resist the chemical action of the vapours from the vast brandy-stores, containing millions and millions of gallons, and the consequence is that all the buildings in Cognac are of a piebald hue, which makes many of them look older than they really are, and gives a singular bizarre appearance to the town.

It is to be noted that very little distilling is done by any of the big houses in Cognac, such as the Martells, the Hennesseys, the Otard-Dupuys. They leave this process to the brandy-farmers, the vine-growers in the country around, each of whom distils the wine produced by his own vineyard, and sells the distilled spirit to the Cognac merchants, who by blending the various ages and qualities produce the brands which are known by their respective names in the market. The fact is, the distillation of such a fine spirit can neither be done on a large scale nor far from the place where the wine has been grown. And, besides, there is the inconvenience of carrying wines in bulk which yield only one-eighth of their volume in brandy.

The brandy-farmers of Charente are a distinct class. Every one of them, even if he own no more than a patch of six or seven acres, has his own still and manufactures his own spirit. Most of the stills which I saw were mere shanties of the most primitive type, like Highland bothies or the rude huts in which illicit 'potheen' used to be, and I dare say even now is, manufactured in some wild parts of Ireland. The apparatus is of the simplest kind—just a boiler, with receiver and the 'worm' or serpentine, a mere tube thrust into a big cylinder of cold water. There are usually two of these humble stills in operation, and wood is generally used as fuel. When the farmer commences making his brandy he continues working his stills day and night until he has converted all his wine into spirit. The brandy at this stage is perfectly colourless, and contains the whole of the essential oil, which has subsequently to be removed by a drastic process of filtration. This, however, the farmer leaves to the merchant to whom he brings his brandy for sale.

Many of these brandy-farmers are very wealthy. I was told of one worth £100,000, another £80,000, a third £60,000, and a considerable number with £30,000 and £20,000 apiece—sums which figure out magnificently in francs. But to look at them, you would never guess that they possess as many pence as they have pounds. For, however rich

they may be, they still retain the dress and style of peasants. They make no attempt to ape the manners and fashions of those above them. Each generation is content to live as its predecessor did—a frugal, hard-working life, with its occasional holidays and junkettings, and the exercise of that thrift which is a French peasant's highest pleasure. The pair whom I have already described as driving together into Cognac to sell their brandy may be taken as a fair sample of the class in manners and customs.

Shrewd enough, as far as the making and keeping of money goes, the brandy-farmer of Charente is very simple in other matters. Of banks and all similar depositaries he has a wholesome dread, and often resorts to queer devices for the security of his savings. I heard of one case in which three thousand francs in gold were found stowed away in an old cask, where they had been deposited by the farmer, who, forgetting that he had hidden the money there, had refilled the cask and sold it to one of the large merchants, whose men discovered the treasure-trove by the rattling of the coins when they had emptied the barrel. He believes in no investment except Government Rentes, and thinks twice before letting the hoarded gold pass from his hands even for so safe an investment as that.

The usual mode of culture adopted among the brandy-farmers is to alternate rows of vines with strips of cereals. There are no fences—no trim hedgerows such as skirt you right and left in an English landscape—nothing but the endless monotony of these alternate patches of vineyard and corn-crop.

The finest quality of brandy produced is the 'Fine Champagne' or 'Grande Champagne,' so called from a tract of land in the *arrondissement* which has from time immemorial been known as La Champagne. There is a common notion that the 'Champagne' brandy has something to do with champagne wine, but there is no connection whatever between the two, and the districts which produce them are hundreds of miles apart. The 'Fine Champagne' brandy is distilled from grapes grown on a peculiar soil, composed of very light earth, so light indeed on the surface that it looks like wood-ashes, and the substratum is invariably chalk. The second quality is called 'Petite Champagne,' and the third 'Premier Bois,' distilled from wine grown in the woodland districts. The inferior brandies are those of the Annis vineyards, which lie along the banks of the River Charente.

The grapes are of the white species, not much larger than currants, and the vines seldom bear fruit until four or five years from their planting. They are most vigorous from the age of fifteen to thirty. Many, however, bear well up to fifty and seventy, and some exceptional patriarchs are fruitful up to a hundred years.

But the vineyards of Charente have not been more fortunate than others in escaping the terrible ravages of the phylloxera. This terrible pest made its first appearance in the department in 1874, and for four years swept everything before it. In the first year, in the beginning of August, the vine-growers noticed with dismay that the vine-leaves began to turn yellow and droop; then the grape lost its juice and shrivelled instead of ripening, whilst the tendrils came away in

pieces. In the second year the plants budded slowly and languidly, giving very faint promise of a crop, and the grapes were few and sickly. In the third year things grew still worse, and in the fourth all traces of life vanished, the vines became mere blackened stumps, fit only for fire-wood. It seemed as if the trade which had made Cognac wealthy and famous were doomed to death. For the phylloxera defied all the efforts of science to check its inroads, and to this day I believe that the government reward of 300,000 francs for a perfect cure of the disease remains unclaimed. But the introduction of new and healthy vines from California has been attended with such success that the hopes of the brandy-farmers have revived, and they, in common with the merchants, to whom the largest share of the spoil falls, look forward to the return of the 'old Saturnian reign' when making brandy was only another name for coining money.

The genuine brandy of Cognac is undoubtedly the finest spirit that is distilled. It is also the most expensive. You cannot expect to get anything like pure French brandy for less than six shillings per bottle, and the best is, of course, beyond the means of any but millionaires. I tasted some brandy at Jarnac, a little town ten miles from Cognac, the cost price of which was thirty francs per bottle. It was the favourite brand of the late Emperor Napoleon III., and I suppose would fetch in England something like two guineas per bottle!

Whisky has largely superseded brandy among the upper and middle classes of Great Britain. In the days of worthy Bailie Nicol Jarvie and his father the deacon, 'a tass o' brandy' was the general specific for keeping cold from the stomach, and the 'Glasgow bodies' would have turned up their noses at the suggestion of whisky, which had no vogue among reputable Scottish toppers till the latter end of last century. But it is otherwise now; and though there are millions of gallons of the finest brandy stored in the cellars of the great merchants of Cognac and Jarnac, John Bull, once the best patron of the brandymakers of Charente, can no longer be tempted to buy it lavishly, as in the good old days when Dr Johnson declared that 'he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy.' We do not gauge our heroes now by their brandy-drinking powers, and the merchants of Cognac find their best customers to-day among the American millionaires and newly-fledged colonial magnates who are eager to drink anything that is highly-priced.

HOW DUELS ARE FOUGHT.

To the practical present-day Englishman duelling appears an absurd and ridiculous custom. A challenge nowadays would be regarded as an invitation to murder, pure and simple, or as a piece of grotesque tomfoolery. For a gentleman 'to call out' an enemy would be equivalent to calling him a fool and acknowledging that the challenger himself was an idiot. Yet it is only just over fifty years since the custom died out in the United Kingdom.

Until 1843 no gentleman could afford to refuse a challenge; indeed, it required far more courage

to refuse a challenge than to accept one. In that year, however, a Colonel Fawcett was killed in a duel by his brother-in-law, Lieutenant Munro, and this incident resulted in the prohibition of military duels, expulsion from the army being the penalty for infraction of this law. From that time duelling went out of fashion. The last duel actually fought in the United Kingdom was in 1851, when the Mayor of Sligo and a lawyer met. It is only in English-speaking countries that duelling is not still practised. In all other parts of the civilised world every gentleman is bound by the code of honour to avenge an insult by seeking to kill, and running the risk of being killed by, the offender.

It is in France where duels are most common, over four thousand 'meetings' taking place every year. Military men, journalists, and politicians form the larger proportion of the duellists, and to members of the last two professions fencing and shooting are as necessary a part of their education as military training is of the former.

In French duels there are two seconds, whose duty it is to arrange all the details of the contest. The challenged person has, of course, the choice of weapons. In a duel with swords one of the seconds is armed with a stout walking-stick with which to strike up the weapons in case of foul fighting or immediately one of the combatants is wounded, however slightly. A duel with pistols is a very different affair from ordinary firing when one has time to take aim. The antagonists stand twenty-five paces apart, their right sides facing each other—in order to present the least surface to their opponent's aim—with their pistols held by their sides. One of the seconds gives the word of command: 'Fire! One, two, three!' and the shot must be fired between 'one' and 'three.' As the words are spoken rapidly, often as fast as they can be uttered, it is impossible to do more than glance along the barrel before firing. The skill, however, of some duellists is remarkable. M. Clemenceau is the most accurate marksman in France, and some of his feats savour more of magic than skill. He challenged a journalist who had insulted him by saying that Clemenceau's character did not deserve recognition, and that he for one would not take off his hat to him in the street. Before the duel Clemenceau told his opponent, as he would not lift his hat to him, he would take it off for him with a bullet. Clemenceau did not quite succeed, but his bullet turned the hat half-way round the journalist's head—without removing it, however. On another occasion Clemenceau promised to cut off his opponent's ears if two shots were arranged. Though only one shot was exchanged, Clemenceau was as good as his word, and shot off one ear.

The code of honour lays down certain cases in which a gentleman can refuse a challenge without tarnishing his reputation. Very near relatives may refuse to attempt to murder each other, a debtor should not try to kill his creditor, and a

gentleman would not dream of fighting a notorious blackguard, for 'to give satisfaction' to such a person is obviously an abuse of terms. A celebrated duellist may also refuse to meet an ordinary person, though a challenge from a person of lower rank cannot be ignored by any but those who have established their reputation in several duels.

As a rule French duels are harmless. In some twelve hundred duels fought between civilians during the last twenty years, only a dozen combatants were killed; the same percentage were injured, while the remaining ninety-eight per cent. left the field of battle unscathed.

Among German students duels are common, but very rarely does one terminate fatally. The students live in lodgings, and the only bonds into which they enter with each other are those undertaken when they join a Corps or a *Burschenschaft*. Every member is obliged to submit to the code of honour, which directs the members when and how to resent injuries, real or fancied. The members of the *Burschenschaften* are not obliged to duel, and hence they are regarded with contempt by the members of the Corps. The members of the different duelling societies are distinguished by the colour of their caps. The cost to each member of belonging to a Corps is not less than £100 per annum.

Duels are fought when no provocation has been given. The *Ehregericht*, or Court of Honour, decides that one is to be fought between two given members with the object of accustoming them to use their swords and to keep their hands well in. From the decision of the *Ehregericht* there is no appeal, and a member refusing to obey is expelled from the Corps. Swords are the weapons in these duels, and despite the use of leather guards and padding, many flesh-wounds are inflicted, though serious results are rare. The students pride themselves on their scars and wounds, and in order to make them more prominent, they anoint them with beer.

Though forbidden by law and punishable by imprisonment in a fortress, duelling is very common among the officers of the German army. Until recently they have been bound by the military code of honour to accept challenges, though they were not allowed to fight a tradesman. In 1887 an officer was expelled from the army for refusing to accept a challenge. But the Emperor of Germany prohibited duelling a short time ago, and decreed that disputes should be settled by a Court of Honour.

In Austria the duel, though less common, is far more deadly than in France and Germany. Pistols are the usual weapons, and the antagonists are placed only a few paces from each other. With the sword, long and furious duels are also fought out. Both military men and civilians fight with great bitterness.

Russian duellists stand fifteen yards apart, and they are allowed to advance five paces at a given signal and fire at will. If both parties advance to the limit before firing, the distance between them is reduced to five yards. Should one fire and miss, the other is allowed to advance his five paces before returning fire. Sometimes one is mortally wounded before firing, but has still sufficient strength left to advance five yards, take steady aim, and shoot his opponent dead.

In the Baltic Provinces this sanguinary method

is replaced by one still more horrible. The combatants stand only three paces apart; the pistols are held pointing upwards, and at a given signal they are lowered and discharged. It would seem impossible to avoid killing one's man at such close quarters, but this is not the case. The duellists are both so anxious to get the first shot that both often miss, the sharp, downward movement of the arm causing the bullet to be buried in the ground or only wound the lower extremities. Sometimes four or five shots are exchanged without either party being injured.

Among the hot-blooded Italians and Spaniards duelling is a common every-day method of settling disputes. The sword is the usual weapon, though the stiletto is also frequently used. Sometimes, in order to insure the death of at least one of the combatants, they are tied foot to foot and fight it out with daggers.

A N O L D M A I D.

Her eyes like quiet pools are clear ;

Her placid face is sweet and fair ;

The frost of many a vanished year

Lies on her hair.

She has no memories of vows

Exchanged below an April moon,

Or whispered converse 'neath the boughs

Of rose-bright June.

She never planned her wedding gown—

This sweet old maiden true and good ;

For her Life held no sacred crown

Of motherhood.

Yet to the shelter of her side

The little orphan children press ;

'Tis known she mothers, far and wide,

The motherless.

The poor and suffering love her well—

Such ready sympathy she shows ;

The sorrow-burdened freely tell

To her their woes.

For those who stumble, those who fall,

Her heart with gentlest ruth is stirred ;

She has a kindly smile for all—

A cheering word.

With Fate she never wages strife ;

* It must be right, since God knows best ;

And so she lives her useful life,

Blessing and blest.

She strews the thorny paths with flowers ;

She turns the darkness into day ;

And, as we clasp her hand in ours,

We can but say :

* Dear friend, so rich in love and truth,

With large, warm heart, and steadfast mind,

'Twas well for some that in your youth

The men were blind.'

E. MATHESON.